

3

694.9.16.
3

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable
HOUSE of COMMONS,

A T
St. Margaret's Westminster,

On Wednesday, March, 15, 17th.

B E I N G

The Day appointed by Her M A J E S T Y for
a General F A S T and Humiliation to be observ'd in a
most Solemn and Devout manner, for obtaining the
Pardon of our Sins, and imploring Gods Blessing and
Assistance on the Arms of Her Majesty and Her Allies,
engag'd in the present War: And for Restoring and
Perpetuating P E A C E, &c.

By **PHILIP BISSE, D. D.** *By of Hereford*

L O N D O N :

Printed by J. B. for JONAH BOWYER, at the
Rose, in Ludgate-street, 1710.

STANDARD

THE

STANDARD

AT

STANDARD

STANDARD

STANDARD

STANDARD

STANDARD

STANDARD

Dr. BISSE's
F A S T
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS

On Wednesday March 15th, 17⁹⁰.

Jovis 16. die Mar. 1709.

Order'd,

That the Thanks of this House be given to Dr. *Bisse*, for the excellent good Sermon by him Preach'd before this House, Yesterday at St. Margaret's *Westminster*. And that he be desired to Print the same; And that Mr. *Annesley*, Mr. *Bromley*, Mr. *Windsor*, Sir *William Whitlocke* and Mr. *Nicholas*, do acquaint him therewith.

Order'd,

That no other Person do presume to Print the said Sermon, but such as Dr. *Bisse* shall appoint.

Paul Jodrell, Cl. Dom. Com.

ISAIAH LXII. 6, 7.

*I have set Watchmen on thy Walls,
O Jerusalem, which shall never
hold their Peace Day nor Night:
Ye that make mention of the Lord,
keep not silence.*

*And give him no rest, till he establish,
and till he make Jerusalem a Praise
in the Earth.*

IT was ever the manner of Gods chosen People in ancient Time, and of all Christian States in succeeding Ages, to ordain, That National Humiliations should be made to Almighty God, when they were press'd with any sore Judgments, and severely Chastized by his righteous Hand: But it hath not been as usual, altho' it would doubtless, have been as commendable a Practice, for Nations

B

to

to *Humble* themselves *under the mighty Hand of God*, when he gives them reasonable hopes, that his *due time* approaches to *lift them up*.

Indeed, notwithstanding the equal desire in all Nations of putting an end to War; God alone knows, whether he will yet vouchsafe to give, for He alone it is, that must at last *give us the Blessing of Peace*: But we ought all to know, and it shall be my Business at present, to enlarge upon this great and not unseasonable Truth; That, when we are waiting the Issue of any remarkable Event, *Humiliation of Soul* is a Duty well becoming sinful Creatures.

Whenever there are just apprehensions of Calamitous Times to come; as it is natural for a People to take Refuge in *sanctifying Fasts, and calling solemn Assemblies*; so hath it been the direction of God by his Prophets, and particularly by his Prophet Joel, that *The Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, should then weep between the Porch and the Altar, and say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to Reproach*. But the Words of my Text seem to imply, that the like incessant Supplications should be poured out before him, when, after a course of calamitous times, he gives

gives a prospect to his People, that he is intending to *Establiſh* again their *Jerusalem*, and to make it a *Praise* in the *Earth*. I, ſaith God, have ſet *Watchmen* on thy *Walls*, O *Jerusalem*, which ſhall never hold their *Peace Day* nor *Night*.—
 Theſe are the ſame, that were to Weep between the *Porch* and the *Altar* in times of *Reproach*.—
 Then, in a moſt exalted manner of *Speech*, follows a *Direction* to theſe *Watchmen* on the *Wall*, to make their ſolemn and moſt earneſt *Humiliation* likewise for the *Proſperity* of *Jerusalem*.—*Ye that make mention of the Lord*,—or as it is otherwiſe *Translated*.—*Ye that are the Remembrancers of the Lord*, keep not ſilence, hold not your *peace Day* nor *Night*, give him no reſt, until he eſtabliſh, and 'till he make *Jerusalem* a *Praise* in the *Earth*.

And with great reaſon it is, that on all *Emergencies* of a publick Nature, this ſhould be the practice of *Religious States* and *Kingdoms*. For the *Dispensations* of *Providence*, tho' they are of various kinds, do all tend to the raiſing in the *Minds* of *Men* a due *Senſe* of *Gods Juſtice* and *Mercy* in his *Government* of the *World*: And therefore, whether at any time in *Anger*, he ſaith unto the *Sword*, *Sword go thro' this Land*: Or again, in *Mercy* vouchſaſes to

say, *Put up thy self into thy Scabbard, rest and be still*: Whether he at any time, by the Convulsions of War, arises to shake terribly the Earth; or again, maketh Peace in all the World, by *knap-ping the Spear in sunder, and burning the Chariots in the Fire*; the Duty of Humiliation is equally the same; the same awful Warning is proclaim'd to all,— *Be still then, and know that I am God.*

But besides, the restoring Peace to the World, is a Blessing of the most solemn Nature; for Wars are properly an appeal of Nations to the *Lord of Hosts, the God mighty in Battle*, for the Justice of their Cause, which can be decided by no Humane Authority; and therefore, when he is about to determine the final Issues of War, does it not become his sinful Creatures to humble themselves before him, in expectation of his decisive Sentence in this momentous Affair, which they have lodg'd before his righteous Tribunal? The many Battles wherein he hath prosper'd our Arms, have been so many gracious Intimations, that he doth favourably allow of our Appeal; and those that have pleaded in this Cause for us, have done it with great Honour, and unparalell'd Success: but the Issue of the whole Event lies still before

fore him undecided ; and therefore, in this Crisis of our Affairs, O ye, that are the Remembrancers of the Lord, do not ye keep silence, give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a Praise in the Earth. And that I may represent to your Thoughts the Propriety of this solemn Humiliation, on the Hopes of prosperous Times to come ; I shall reduce what I have to offer to you, under these three general Heads. It becomes us to humble our selves in the most devout and solemn manner,

First, That an end may at length be put to this tedious and wasting War, that we may indeed have an effectual Peace.

Secondly, That this Peace, if God shall vouchsafe to give it us, may be prosperous in it self, and tend to the publick Interests of this Nation.

Thirdly, That we may be prepared by our Humiliation and unfeign'd Repentance, to avoid the evil Influence it may have upon our Manners, and to make a right use of so great a Blessing.

First,

First, That an end may at length be put to this tedious and wasting War, that we may indeed have an effectual Peace. God seems to have set a peculiar Character on the dreadful Transactions of this Age; *At which the Ears of all that hear it may tingle.* For can it be observ'd, without dread and Terror of Heart, that there should be at this time engag'd in most destructive Wars, not only the whole Body of all Christian States together, but They alone of all the Nations that dwell on the Face of the Earth? It must be certainly some high Provocation of God's vindictive Justice on those that are *called by his Name*, which can have drawn down his Fury upon them, in so dreadful and distinguishing a manner. The Heathen Nations enjoy a profound and universal Peace, while we are impiously reeking in one anothers Blood, to the great Reproach of the Christian Name.

It is observable, that of the three ancient Divisions of the Earth, *Europe* alone, all along hath been, and still continues to be, entirely Christian; upon which account I conceive it is, that the Prophets, when they speak of the Kingdom of Christ, so often mention the Isles
of

of the *Gentiles*; which were always understood to comprehend this Western Division of the World. But they are not more distinguish'd from the rest, by the Blessing of the Gospel of Peace, than they are at this time, by the Judgment of an universal War.

And all this Misery brought upon so great a part of Mankind, almost by the boundless Ambition of a single Man: An Indication this, that it is the Hand of God upon us: Which, as well in the ways of Providence, as in the works of Nature, does always, by the most simple Causes, produce the most extensive and general Events. Indeed, the Distress which this single Instrument of God's Wrath has brought upon the Christian World, is now become of so complex a kind; the Pretensions of the several States engaged against him, are so various to be provided for, and so difficult to be satisfied, that no human Wisdom seems sufficient to retrieve us out of this perplex'd Condition, and restore to All a Safe and Reasonable Peace. No! God alone, who by the Obviousness of the Means, did in all appearance, bring this Distress on all the Nations professing his Name; can, again, incline them All to acquiesce in reasonable Terms; tho', possibly, not so advantageous
to

to their separate Interests, as they, with Justice, might separately demand. So that, were not the Hand of God judicially concern'd, in bringing this great Calamity upon the Christian World; did it, suitably to the natural course of Things, proceed from the restless Ambition of One Man (as Men indeed may be the real Causes of infinite Mischiefs to one another) yet must it be the Work of an All-wise and Over-ruling Providence, to bring us again out of this complicated Evil. It is not now, in the Power of him, that began these Troubles, were it sincerely in his Intentions, to put an End to them. Even among his Enemies, some Interests are alter'd, some Pretensions advanced, and many Occurrences of a perplex'd and intricate Nature have interven'd, and must be satisfy'd, whatever Concessions be made on his part, to answer the just Demands upon him.

On the whole, the Wisdom of Providence must of necessity interpose, in giving us Peace, however we came to be involv'd in War; whether by the judicial Hand of God, or the natural Ambition of Man. And it highly behoves us all, *to cry mightily to our God*: For He it is, *that trieth the Nations in a Ballance*: To
one

one he saith, *Thou art weighed, and found wanting: To another, God hath numbred thy Kingdom, and finished it: And this he doth, that Men may fear before him.* And indeed, in proportion to their Fear, to the Sense they own to have of his Dread Sovereignty over them, does he divide to the Nations their Inheritance, and set the Bounds of their Habitations.

It is certain, that our Enemies have drank much deeper than we have, of *the Cup of his Fury*: But it may be, they have in their way, express'd also more visible Signs of Humiliation and Repentance. An Advantage wherein, I fear, they neither are the Objects of our Envy, nor will be of our Emulation: But an Advantage it is, that whoever hath it, hath a better Defence, than either Sword or Shield: and therefore it more concerns us, now upon the Issue of this great Event, that after All the Victories and Honours gain'd in the Field, others do not go away *with our Blessing*. We ought therefore, in the

Second place, To humble our selves before God, that if he shall give Peace to the Christian World, it may prove Prosperous
C with

with regard to Us, and tend to the publick Interests of this Nation.

Where many States are engag'd in a War; God, upon the Issue of it, allots to each undoubtedly, not what they Desire, but what they Deserve: Nor doth he measure their Deserts, so much by the original Merits of their Claims, as by their Deportment under his Judgments, during such a Calamity; or even by the Use, which he foresees they will make of a Deliverance from it. These are Circumstances, which will become prevalent Articles in the sight of God, and affect the very Equity of our Cause, whenever it shall come to a final Determination before Him. We cannot but be Conscious, what our Behaviour has hitherto been under the heavy Burdens of the War; and God alone knows, though every good Man has just reason to Fear, what will be the effects of Ease and Plenty, on the Manners of a wicked and corrupted People. And therefore, as we have little reason to presume, on any Account, that God should be partial to us; so have we all imaginable reason, to humble our selves mightily now before him, that we may, if possible, retrieve

trieve his Blessing, and obtain a Decision, favourable to our Interests, in the conclusion of the whole Event.

Other Nations have born a much greater share than Ours, in the Desolations of War; but however it may appear at first sight, the Ravages of a Country are but a transient Evil, in respect of such Miseries, as may follow from an ill-grounded and insecure Peace. Such Disasters may be, and in rich Countries, which are the Sear of them, most commonly are recover'd in the compass of a little Time; but an Age shall not retrieve the growing Mischiefs of a disadvantageous Treaty. These indeed are Subjects beyond the line of private Enquiry; but every private Man has an Interest and a Right to interpose with his Prayers, for a Blessing on those whose Province they are; on those who are Honour'd with the high Trust of providing proper Securities for the publick Weal, in Matters of such Consequence to future Generations.

And besides, the World hath taken an Opinion, and we in some measure know by Experience, that it is more difficult to treat

with our present Enemy, than to engage Him in the Field. The Character foretold by the Prophet Daniel, of a Syrian King, is not so particular, but that it may be applied to others in After-ages of the World. *A King, saith he, of fierce Countenance, and understanding dark Sentences, shall stand up; and through his Policy shall he cause Craft to prosper; and he shall magnify himself in his Heart, and by Peace shall he destroy many: And of another, it is said, He hath braken the Covenant, he hath despised the Cities, he regardeth no Man.* If we transact with Princes of this Character, Princes whose Views ly towards destroying by Peace, whom they are no longer able to withstand in War, we have greater reason still to implore a Blessing on our Counsels in this difficult Affair.

For when we have done our utmost, it is God alone, that can make an utter end of Affliction, as the Prophet speaketh, and cause, that it shall not rise up a second Time; that can comfort us now again, after the time that he hath Plagued us, and for the Years wherein we have suffered Adversity; And let the glorious Majesty of the Lord our God be upon us,
prosper

*Prosper thou the Work of our Hands upon us, O
prosper thou our bandy Work!*

But after all, the most prosperous^r Circumstances of outward Glory, *The estalish-
ing Jerusalem, and making it a Praise in
the Earth*, may not be accompanied with
those real Blessings which make up
the true and proper Happiness of a People.
And therefore, if God shall vouchsafe to grant
us, in this Conjunction, the utmost that
can be desired, as to the outward Felicity and
Splendor of the *British Name*; it will, in
the

Third place, require our most serious Humiliation before Him, that we may be prepared to avoid the evil Influence it may have upon our Manners, and to make a right use of so great a Blessing.

If we regard the Influence, that Outward Things have on the Manners of publick Societies, we may justly bless God, whenever he sends Calamities upon us; and Humble our selves under the Apprehensions, of entring into times of Prosperity and Peace. For to the Reproach of Human Kind

it may be observed, that no Instance can be found in History of a State, that upon the occasion of any signal Success in their Affairs, have set themselves to reform the Wickedness of their People. Success in extending and securing Dominion may introduce Politeness of Manners, and Notions of Honour, and other excellent Virtues of civil Life: But the Fear of God, the Spirit of true Religion, the real Graces which make up the Christian Life, and which certainly ought to be the peculiar Care of a Christian State, are never raised in publick Communities, but by an apprehension of publick Dangers: And what is worse, not ever known long to survive the removal of them. Security and Ease soon extinguish the Sense, of what we feared, and felt, in times of Distress. And therefore, how desirable soever Peace may be, it requires the utmost Care in all Orders of Men, to prevent as much as possible, the evil Influences of it, which have never yet been totally prevented in any Kingdom of the World.

It is a known Rule, That the Bodies of Men are to be cautiously treated, after very severe Fatigues, and Services in the Field; and gradually admitted to use the Common
Re-

Refreshments of Nature : It is the same with regard to the Genius and Humours of Publick Bodies, after they are reliev'd from the weight of an expensive and tedious War. Men don't presently feel the true State which their Affairs are in ; they are not sensible of the wasted Condition, to which they are reduced, and in the Joy of their Hearts, are apt to surfeit upon their Triumphs, and launch out into such Expences at first, as cannot be supported but by a great recruit of Wealth, arising only from a long course of Years, under a Glorious and Peaceful Reign. And therefore the proper Preparative to a desirable Peace, as well, as the most effectual Means to attain it, is certainly a solemn Humiliation of all Orders of Men, that they may be disposed to make no ill Use of so great a Blessing.

And of all Nations, that ever were engaged in War, this is most necessary for us. For the wild Inclinations to the Gaieties and Extravagancies of Living, which even during the heavy Pressures we are under, have most unnaturally grown up among us, are sufficient in a few Years, to render us a most miserable People, if we enter into a Peace,
but

but with the same Dispositions as we come out of the War. We seem to have Anticipated with great Industry, the mischievous Effects of Plenty; while not only the publick Taxes, but a scarcity also, not known to former times, hath reduced Multitudes among Us to the utmost Extremities. While the Poor *Eat Bread by Weight, and with Care; and drink Water by Measure, and with Astonishment: how do the careless Ones, according to the Description of Amoz, Live at Ease, drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments! but are not griev'd for the Affliction of Joseph.*

But alas, such miserable Dissentions also, such domestick Distractions have possess'd the Minds of Men, while we are struggling with the Opposition of a Foreign Enemy, as are seldom known to rise in other Countries, but after they have been long surfeited with Affluence and Prosperity; and grown into Feuds among themselves, for want of Employment Abroad. These are fatal Symptoms, and will prove Seeds of Misery to us, whenever we can attend to our own Undoing, unless God in Mercy gives us another Spirit and Temper also, whenever he gives us the *Blessing of Peace.*

In-

Indeed, the infinite Impieties, and of the most flagrant kind, besides that Luxury and those Dissentions, which have already overspread us like a Flood, give just reason to fear, that the severest part of our Calamities is yet to come. God may grant Peace to the Christian World; and yet, though it may be compassed even by the Valour of our Arms, it may, neither with regard to our Political, nor our Moral Interests, turn any ways to our Advantage. We have had the Glory of Victories and High Renown: God grant that be not our only *Part and Lot in this Matter*. Without his Blessing on our Counsels, in this great Conjunction, our share in the Peace, may prove more mischievous to our publick Interests, than the continuance of War; and without a Reformation of those Vices, which we have most unnaturally run into, in defiance of these Calamities, we shall soon in times of Peace, *become as Sodom, and be like unto Gomorrha.*

Those Cities, *For their Fornication, and going after strange Flesh*, are said by the Apostle to be set forth as an Example, *suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* And yet the Sins

D

of

of these wicked People, the Cry whereof is said to have come up to Heaven, were not of so Heinous a Nature, as are those dreadful Blasphemies, which lately appear'd to have been long Publish'd, and boldly Scatter'd, and loudly Proclaim'd in our Streets. Ask now I pray you of the Days that are past, that were before you, since God created Man upon the Earth; and ask from the one side of Heaven unto the other; whether there hath been any such thing, as this great thing, or hath been heard like it? Did ever a Nation bid Defiance to their Gods, which yet are no Gods! Be astonish'd, O ye Heavens, at this and be ye horribly afraid! Publick as these Blasphemies were before, to the Grief and Amazement of good Men; would to God it were now consider'd, whether they will not bring us under a National Guilt, unless they are disclaim'd in some Publick and National Manner.

In the Case of the Sin of *Achan*, whereof He alone was personally Guilty, The Lord said unto *Joshua*, *Israel hath sinned, therefore turned they their Backs, before their Enemies, because they were Accursed.* *Achan* is said to have wrought Folly in *Israel*; he had stol'n
some

some of the Spoils, and he had hid his Sin; and yet the Lord was Wrath with all the Congregation, and said, I will not be with you any more, unless ye destroy the Accursed from among you. It concerns us all to lay this Matter to Heart; to consider what Proportion this single hidden Sin of Achan bears to those dreadful Outrages against God and his Christ; which have been openly publish'd among us, in so many Blasphemous and Atheistical Writings.

Let us then, according to the Direction of God in that Case to the Elders of Israel, and suitably to the general Design of this solemn Day— *Up and sanctify the People, and Sanctify our selves— it may be, that the Lord will also put away our Sin; that he will return and Repent, and leave a Blessing behind Him.* Our putting away our Personal Sins, and our publick Abhorrence of the Accursed among us, may induce him to continue to be with us, To preside still over our Camp, and over our Tabernacle.

And let all Orders of Men, especially the Watchmen on the Wall, the Remembrancers of the Lord, incessantly pray for the Peace of Jerusalem :
That

That as it is built, so it may ever be a City at Unity within it self; That God would so Establish Peace within its Walls, that there may also be Plenteousness within its Palaces; and that he would so exalt it in Dignity among its Allies, and over its Enemies, that it may ever be a Praise in the whole Earth!

Which God of his Mercy grant, &c.

F I N I S.

BOOKS Printed for and sold by Jonah Bowyer, at the Sign of the Rose in Ludgate-street, near the West End of St. Paul's Church.

A Sermon preach'd at the Anniversary Meeting of the Sons of the Clergy in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on Thursday Dec. 2. 1708. By Philip Bisse, D. D.

A Sermon preach'd before the Sons of the Clergy at their Anniversary Meeting in the Church of St. Paul, Decemb. 6. 1709. By Francis Atterbury, D. D. Preacher at the Rolls, Dean of Carlisle, and Chaplain in ordinary to Her Majesty.

Not as pleasing Men, but God: A Sermon preach'd at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, Judges and Aldermen, Jan. 29. 1710. By George Smalridge, D. D.

A Sermon preach'd before the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of London, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on Monday the 30th of Jan. 1710. Being the Martyrdom of King Charles I. by Andrew Snape, D. D. Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Somerset, and Rector of St. Mary at Hill.